

laughed and planned for more than 30 years—strikes me as a concise summary of the man.

Over the fireplace hung an old etching of Jerusalem, identical to that which once adorned the office of Teddy Kollek, the city's longtime mayor: for Neuhaus lived, thought and wrote within a thoroughly biblical cast of mind, in which the earthly Jerusalem represents the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation—the fulfillment of humanity's deepest spiritual longings. On one wall was an abstract, modernistic print of a boy riding a Chagall-like bird: "That's little Dickie Neuhaus," he once told me, "riding the Holy Spirit." A Byzantine icon of his patron, the apostle John, marked another wall, with a vigil light burning before it; Richard used to joke that his Lutheran pastorate, the church of St. John the Evangelist in the then desperately poor Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, was "St. John the Mundane," as distinguished from the Episcopalian Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Morningside Heights. There was a colossal sound system, for he loved music, especially Bach; there were bookcases containing the Lutheran Book of Worship, from which he and the ecumenical Community of Christ in the City, with whom he lived, prayed vespers every evening, before and after his reception into the Catholic Church; and there were ample supplies of bourbon and cigars, both of which Richard regarded as essential complements to the ongoing, boisterous conversation that was his intellectual and spiritual lifeblood.

For a man of sharply expressed opinions, he was also a skilled listener and a gentle counselor, with a particular care for helping young men and women figure out what God had in mind for their lives. In the Catholic phase of his ministry, which began after his ordination by Cardinal John O'Connor in 1991, an act which he regarded as completing his commitment to Lutheranism as a reform movement within the one Church of Christ, he served a working-class parish, as he had done as a Lutheran; in both cases, he declined to preach "down" to his congregations, such that his challenging sermons deepened many people's faith. He was generous in supporting the poor throughout the world, giving away a significant portion of his lecture fees and book royalties.

Richard Neuhaus was also an American patriot with a critical love for the country to which he moved, permanently, at age 15, after a rambunctious childhood and adolescence in Pembroke, Ontario, where his father

was a Lutheran pastor. As a teenager, he ran a filling station in Cisco, Texas—likely the only counselor of two popes and several presidents who ever joined the Texas Chamber of Commerce at age 16. His distinguished career as a public intellectual led some to think that he was embroidering things a bit when he claimed he had never graduated from high school; but he hadn't.

He had the remarkable, and mathematically counterintuitive, ability to multiply his enthusiasm and energy while dividing it with others. That was a grace. And that is one of the many reasons why so many of us will miss him as we shall miss few others.

A TRIBUTE TO REV. WALTER E. FAUNTROY, FORMER MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AT AND RETIREMENT FROM NEW BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise for the uniquely important occasion of honoring a man I am pleased to call a personal friend, but more important, a distinguished former member of the House of Representatives, and my predecessor, Walter E. Fauntroy, on the occasion of his 50th anniversary and simultaneous retirement as pastor from the New Bethel Baptist Church, one of the great churches in our Nation's capital. Many of you remember Rev. Fauntroy as your distinguished colleague. You already know that Walter has lived the lives of several men—a distinguished minister, a Member of this Congress, a civil rights leader, a scholar, a devoted husband and a father. Consequently, when America hears the name Walter Fauntroy, we think of more than one man, because he has done the work of several energetic men, often at the same time. It is difficult to find an American who has played so many important leadership roles and who has been so deeply a part of actually weaving a new fabric of equality and justice for our country.

Rev. Fauntroy was sworn in as a Member of the House of Representatives, the District of Columbia's first delegate in the 20th century, on March 23, 1971. For 10 terms, he helped shape national policy, serving on important committees and subcommittees, including the House, Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee, the Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy, which he chaired for 6 years, and the Subcommittee on International Development, Finance, Trade, and Monetary Policy, which he chaired, for 4 years. As a Member, Congressman Fauntroy also chaired the Bipartisan/Bicameral Task Force on Haiti for 15 years. Before I was elected, I was pleased to join Congressman Fauntroy and two others at a sit-in at the South African Embassy to launch the "Free South Africa" movement, which ultimately led to the end of apartheid. Congressman Fauntroy is very fondly remembered here as a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus and was its chair from 1981 to 1983.

Before the District of Columbia achieved home rule, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Rev. Fauntroy to the DC city council, where he served from 1967 to 1969. For his leadership in the home rule struggle, the people of the District of Columbia showed their confidence in Rev. Fauntroy by electing him to the House of Representatives. In Congress, Fauntroy was a father of home rule for the District of Columbia, which allowed the District to elect its own Mayor and city council.

Even before his election, Fauntroy was a national figure in the civil rights movement and a key advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Rev. King named him director of his Washington bureau of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and national coordinator of the Poor People's Campaign. He later was chair of the board of directors of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia.

I am pleased to join the congregation of New Bethel Baptist Church and I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Rev. Walter Fauntroy for his unusually successful and dedicated life of service to the people of the United States of America, the residents of the District of Columbia, and the congregation of the New Bethel Baptist Church.